

Crop Summary - 2003

2003 Crop Summary: Utah got off to a difficult start in 2003 with snowpack levels on January 1 at only 66% to 85% of normal and water storage at key irrigation reservoirs in the state at only 47% capacity. Warm temperatures and a lack of precipitation in January did not improve conditions. In Salt Lake City, daily temperatures averaged 9.4 degrees above normal for the month. The poor January weather pushed snowpack levels even lower to between 39% to 62% of average.

The warm dry spring prompted farmers to begin spring planting activities earlier than normal. Spring plantings of oats, barley and spring wheat progressed 1-2 weeks ahead of normal while corn planting kept to normal schedules. With another year of drought expected, growers made an effort to complete planting of small grains early in order to take advantage of any spring rains.

The phenological development of crops continued ahead of normal schedules throughout late spring and early summer with spring seeded small grains emerging and heading about 1-2 weeks earlier than usual. Grasshoppers and Mormon Crickets plagued farmers, an estimated 2.7 million acres of range and cropland were infested with the pests in 2003.

July and August were extremely hot and dry. According to the NOAA (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration) office in Salt Lake City, July and August were the first and second hottest months ever recorded at Salt Lake International Airport. The early start to the growing season and the hot, dry weather prompted an early start to the harvest season. Harvest for grain of oats, barley, winter wheat and spring wheat all began 1-2 weeks ahead of normal.

Fall saw corn for silage harvest progress 1-2 weeks ahead of normal with the harvest starting the first week in September. Corn for grain harvest began on a normal schedule in the last week of September but quickly began progressing ahead of schedule.

In general, increases in harvested acres and yields led to increased production totals in 2003. Overall, 2003 saw improvements over 2002 but it was still a hard year on Utah's farmers with crop production well below non drought years.

Crop Production Index (1977=100):Crops, by Commodity Grouping Utah, 1996-2003

Year	Small Grain	Hay	Fruit ¹	Other Crops	Total Crops
	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Percent</i>
1996	125	137	110	106	128
1997	136	148	81	116	136
1998	130	151	122	105	138
1999	129	149	48	108	131
2000	101	136	127	105	125
2001	86	138	60	96	117
2002	65	124	20	87	101
2003	71	135	93	89	114

¹ Fruit production index is derived from total production.